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CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.729
14 March 1996

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND TWENTY-NINTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 14 March 1996, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Ramaker (Netherlands)

GE.96-60884 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 729th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I have on my list of speakers the representatives of the Republic of Korea, Ireland, Poland and Algeria, who will speak on behalf of the Group of 21. I give the floor to the first speaker on my list, the representative of the Republic of Korea, Ambassador Sun.

Mr. SUN (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, taking this opportunity to address the Conference on Disarmament for the first time, as a new comer in Geneva, I would like to extend to you my warm congratulations on your assumption of the presidency.

I would like to take advantage of my first appearance by making some brief observations on disarmament issues.

The Republic of Korea, though participating in the CD as a non-member State at this stage, joins those countries which desire the early conclusion of an effectively verifiable comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. Under this position, I assure you, Mr. President, of my delegation's willingness to cooperate with all the participants of the CD in expediting the process of the CTBT negotiations.

The world continues to search for a new international order since the end of the cold war. A critical factor in this search is no doubt the mechanism we devise to control military power. In this sense, the Conference on Disarmament is playing an extremely important role in creating a stable mechanism for the maintenance of world peace. From past history we should learn lessons for securing effective international control of armaments. We should also realize that we can gain no durable peace if we approach our task with suspicion, mistrust or fear.

On the ladder leading to world peace, the CD is still on the bottom rung of the ascent towards the limitation and control of all armaments. The CD seems to have taken a solid first step by successfully concluding its negotiations on the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1992. Thereafter, however, remarkable progress has yet to be made in subsequent CD negotiations. Since last year, the CD has failed to establish ad hoc committees on transparency in armaments (TIA), negative security assurances (NSA) and prevention of a nuclear arms race in outer space (PAROS).

This year, the CD has yet to establish an ad hoc committee on a "ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices". In my understanding, the main obstacles to the establishment of these committees come from differing opinions either on a "linkage theory" or on the scope of the mandate for the fissile material cut-off committee. A basic agreement in the CD could not be reached as to whether the fissile material cut-off committee will be convened together with a committee on nuclear disarmament or with transparency in armaments. Whether or not the mandate for the fissile material cut-off committee includes stockpiles on top of the future production of fissile materials is one issue. Whether TIA will be limited to conventional armaments only, or whether it should also include weapons of mass destruction, is another issue. These are

(Mr. Sun, Republic of Korea)

problems that could most effectively be tackled separately. To resolve these questions, I would like to suggest that the CD clearly define the greatest common measure for the different positions presented so far, and apply the simplest principle to implement it. The greatest common measure to resolve the algebra of the CD is that we should proceed towards the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear arms. Indeed, the simplest principle is that we should not fear to negotiate. When any individual issue needs to be negotiated to achieve our ultimate goal, we should simply start negotiations on that issue, without linking it to another issue. We may start with an easy issue and build up confidence before moving on to more complex ones.

Now, the CD stands at the crossroads. If the CD fails to establish other ad hoc committees, the only fruit to be harvested this year seems to be the conclusion of the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. If the CD fails to bring the CTBT negotiations to a successful conclusion, however, its credibility in the eyes of the world community will be very much diminished. In order to expedite the CTBT negotiations, my delegation believes that the consultations should be strengthened - both inter-group and intra-group. It seems to my delegation that, without political will based on mutual trust among the Western Group, the Eastern European Group, the Group of 21 and the country which does not belong to any group, a conclusion is difficult, and we may indeed face an endless game. We believe that the raison d'être of these groups is to contribute to the production of an effective CTBT through intensive negotiations. Only the spirit of cooperation through checks and balances among the groups can bring this potentially endless game to a satisfactory conclusion in time.

On the other hand, we are encouraged by the fact that no country in the CD objects to completing the negotiations before the end of this year.

My delegation welcomes the two model texts recently introduced by Iran and Australia respectively. Though these texts are not considered an alternate to the "rolling text", we hope that they will assist us in seeing through the "trick mirrors" of the many complicated proposals before us.

Last, but not least, my delegation would like to remind this meeting that the CD has a promise to keep. That promise is to implement decision CD/1356, adopted on 21 September 1995, on the expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament. The indefinite delay of the implementation of this decision is by no means justified.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I give the floor to the representative of Ireland, Ambassador Anderson.

Ms. ANDERSON (Ireland): Mr. President, as this is my first opportunity to do so publicly, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Your dual mandate as President

of the CD and Chairman of the Ad Hoc committee on a Nuclear Test Ban presents you with a daunting task. I am sure that you will carry it out with your customary wisdom and skill.

It is not often that a negotiating body faces such a clear-cut challenge as that which now confronts the Conference on Disarmament. At plenary meetings over recent weeks, speaker after speaker has referred to the "window of opportunity" that currently exists in relation to the CTBT negotiations. There have also been repeated cautionary notes that this window will not remain open indefinitely, nor indeed for much longer. This concern about time-frame reflects political realism and not tactical manoeuvring. Either decisive and courageous action is taken over the coming weeks, or we fritter away an opportunity that may not recur for a very long time.

The achievement of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty has for many years been a key objective of Ireland's foreign policy. Such a treaty would be a major step towards facilitating the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and would greatly strengthen the non-proliferation regime. It would be a concrete expression of the will of the international community to stop the development of nuclear weapons, to stop the competition to build ever more exotic and deadly nuclear devices, to stop all nuclear explosions.

We have heard reference in many statements to the essentially small number of issues which remain to be resolved in the CTBT negotiations. Although the text of the Treaty is imprisoned in the celebrated 1,200 brackets, we seem to be agreed that only a handful of keys is required to open all of these locks. In recent weeks, significant contributions to the negotiations have been made by Iran and Australia. The Iranian draft clean text and the Australian model treaty demonstrate that the brackets are not immutable, that with political will and a determination to explore the potential areas of common agreement, solutions to the outstanding issues can be found. The Iranian and Australian documents are more than just resources for us to draw on; they offer important signposts which point in the direction of possible compromises. We know that you, Mr. President, are fully aware of the scope which your own role offers to provide the critical assistance which could help move the negotiations to a new plane.

Ireland supports efforts to achieve a comprehensive test-ban treaty whose scope embraces a true-zero yield; which contains no exemptions or exceptions for any nuclear explosion; which establishes a monitoring system based on agreed technologies, using all of the available sources of information, and inspiring the confidence of the international community in both its effectiveness and non-discriminatory nature; which contains a verification regime capable of acting quickly in response to a suspicious event, whose inspectors can carry out their work in a non-intrusive but effective way and which can arrive at clear results about the nature of any ambiguous event; whose entry-into-force provisions are based on an agreed political balance between the need to secure the treaty's rapid entry into force and the need to ensure that the treaty is ratified by those States for which its terms are of particular relevance; which will be overseen by an independent treaty

(Ms. Anderson, Ireland)

organization co-located in Vienna with IAEA with which it can explore the most effective and efficient working relationship. The Executive Council of the organization should be fully reflective of the international community and should give appropriate weight to those countries with the most to contribute to the implementation and realization of the CTBT.

One of the phrases which has achieved some resonance in the plenary debates in recent weeks - and, indeed, we heard it used a few moments ago - is that the CD is a hall of "trick mirrors" in which nothing is as it seems to be. This phrase has been applied in particular to the precise nature of the CTBT and to its role in contributing to the goal of complete elimination of nuclear weapons. A goal to which Ireland is strongly committed. Mirrors will of course reflect the perspectives of the people looking into them. And we cannot deny that we come to this negotiation with different perspectives. For many delegations - and I number my own among them - the achievement of nuclear disarmament and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons involves an at times painful choice between what is desirable and what is achievable.

A world free of nuclear weapons is and will remain the goal of Irish policy; all our rational and humane instincts point in that direction. But we also know that the road ahead is full of obstacles and that there are no obvious short cuts. We therefore wholeheartedly agree with those who feel that efforts to link the CTBT to the achievement of a more ambitious objective than the cessation of nuclear testing risks jeopardising the negotiations at this late stage. Yes, we are determined to keep our eyes firmly on the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. But we see the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the CTBT and as soon as possible a fissile "cut-off" treaty as important milestones on the way. My delegation greatly regrets the failure to begin concrete negotiations on the latter treaty in 1995 on the basis of the mandate so carefully elaborated by Ambassador Shannon. The negotiation of such a treaty must be the next major task to be undertaken by the CD in the area of nuclear disarmament.

We also need to take into account the important contribution which unilateral decisions on the reduction of nuclear arsenals, such as the recent steps announced by France, and the results of bilateral negotiations, START for example, play in bringing us closer to our objective. Although this mixture of unilateral, bilateral and multilateral disarmament measures is an unsatisfactory and painstakingly slow approach to achieving progress, it is giving us results and for the moment we see no viable alternative.

In a matter of weeks it will be clear whether or not we have succeeded in grasping the opportunity to achieve a complete cessation of nuclear testing. All delegations must now signal capitals that the negotiations have arrived at the point of decision, that the time for tinkering with brackets is over, that the time for compromise is here. The 1996 session of the CD can achieve the most significant multilaterally negotiated nuclear disarmament measure in over a quarter of a century, or it can become another miserable footnote in the annals of disarmament.

(Ms. Anderson, Ireland)

As we accelerate and try to finalize our work on the CTBT, it is important to provide reassurance to those who may fear that in concentrating on what is achievable in the short term we are fudging or evading the central longer-term questions. In addition to the conclusion of a "cut-off" treaty, we have to consider what additional work the CD might usefully undertake in bringing us closer to the goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Strenuous efforts were made by Ambassador Aye in seeking to define some common ground between delegations on this issue; his statement to the plenary on 15 February on the results of his Presidential consultations provides a basis for continuing discussions. We fully support the call made by the Swedish Foreign Minister to this body that delegations should approach these discussions in good fifth and with a constructive spirit.

In addition to its future work, the CD also has to deal with its expansion. We all know that the question of expansion will not go away. Twenty-three countries are pressing for the urgent implementation of the decision, taken in September 1995, contained in document CD/1356. We share and sympathize with their frustration. These countries have in effect been placed in a twilight zone between full membership and non-member status: a peculiar position which is not referred to in the CD's rules of procedure. But the problem does not end there. A further 13 countries, including Ireland, have applied for membership of the CD and have not received a reply. They have not even been admitted to the twilight zone occupied by the 23.

Ambassador Dr. Hartmann, the Commissioner for Arms Control and Disarmament of Germany, in his statement of 15 February, drew attention to the fact that the CD's membership is at odds with the role it has to play in universal arms control and disarmament. We strongly endorse his point.

It is worth recalling that the decision contained in CD/1356 explicitly states that it was without prejudice to the remaining candidates for membership. Furthermore, General Assembly resolution 50/72 C, adopted on 12 December 1995, urges this body to consider further the remaining candidatures for CD membership at its 1996 session following the presentation of progress reports on the issue of expansion by its President. As we know, the President is now obliged to present such reports at the end of each part of the CD's annual session.

My delegation has an open mind as to procedures for moving the matter forward. If Presidential consultations can of themselves bring results, we will rely on that mechanism. If it seems that such consultations are insufficient to advance matters, we would welcome the appointment of a Friend of the Chair or of a Special Coordinator. We could accept a full plenary debate on the matter including a review by the CD of each individual candidature. We could even envisage all of this taking place in the context of a general consideration of the ideal future size of the CD, if that should prove necessary.

Rule No. 2 of the rules of procedure of the CD states that the membership will be reviewed at regular intervals. What is a regular interval? The last

such review took place in 1993. The previous review was in 1978. I would submit that 3 years, and not 17, is a regular interval and that the CD cannot continue to evade its responsibilities in this regard.

The absolute priority for the CD over the coming weeks is the successful conclusion of a CTBT. No serious-minded delegation wants to see any distraction from that central task or any dissipation of energies. A country like mine, which has already waited 14 years for a reply to its membership application, can show a little further patience. But we need to know that CD members are conscious of the unfinished business and have a genuine commitment to returning to it in a satisfactory manner within a defined time-frame.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Ireland for her statement and for the kind words addressed to me. I give the floor to the representative of Poland, Ambassador Dembinski.

Mr. DEMBINSKI (Poland): It is my intention to offer a few brief comments on the current stage of the CTBT negotiations as well as on the mode of work followed in the Ad Hoc Committee with a view to their timely and successful completion.

Since my delegation has already had the occasion, Sir, to express to you its formal felicitations on your presidency of the CD - felicitations which, of course, I fully share - I propose to turn to the topic at hand. I must say straight away that we welcome your announced intention, in your capacity as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, to come forward soon with a Chairman's paper on the CTBT. It would be important on several counts. First, it would predate the revised rolling text that for technical reasons is normally available in all languages only after the relevant part of the CD session is concluded. Your document would, therefore, offer the delegations a valuable guide to the CTBT negotiations to take home to their capitals.

Secondly, the Chairman's paper would represent a commendable effort to stave off a possible crisis in the negotiations likely to impair the Committee's ability to keep to its agreed schedule. Most importantly, however, bearing the mark of the Chairman's impartiality, such a document would offer proposals for compromise solution to some, if not all, of the sticky issues which have been with us for the past two years.

Given these considerations, I must frankly admit, Mr. President, that I was somewhat disappointed with the cautious, not to say sceptical, reaction of some delegations to your announced proposal.

It will be recalled that as early as 1995, in my capacity as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, I urged delegations to seek consensus language and a rolling text as free of unnecessary brackets as possible. Of course, then - as now - the brackets were and still are the symptoms, not the disease. While no one questioned the need to trim down the CTBT rolling text, the overall number of brackets remained largely unchanged as the negotiations went on and the target date approached. We, today, find with dismay that the number of brackets actually went up, rather than come radically down.

(Mr. Dembinski, Poland)

We must not delude ourselves that a rapid downward trend will commence in that regard and that a clean text will start falling in place once the major outstanding issues are resolved. In my view these are two distinct issues which must not be confused, even less seen as directly depending one upon another. At this stage of the negotiating process we must really start seriously reexamining our favourite positions where they are totally unacceptable to others and block any progress in the negotiations.

We also have to answer another important question: if our paramount political objective is to come up, before the end of the current CD session, with a definitive text of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, do we need to waste time at this late hour on technicalities pertaining to IMS, IDC and OSI - like: who reports to whom, and how, following an on-site inspection? Should not such issues be dealt with at a later date in a more appropriate forum, like the Preparatory Commission, for instance?

What we now need is to concentrate our undivided attention on resolving the key outstanding issues, which include, among others, first, the question of CTBT scope that provides for a comprehensive ban on all nuclear explosions over and above zero yield, including so-called peaceful nuclear explosions, some of which were actually carried out in the 1950s and the 1960s and proved neither safe nor useful. Second, an appropriate and legitimate balance between sovereignty of States parties and the effectiveness of the CTBT's verification mechanism. Third, the place and standing of the five nuclear-weapon States and the nuclear-capable "threshold" States in the treaty, including the CTBT organization. And fourth, the intrinsic nuclear disarmament value of the CTBT which argues against attempts to establish any formal treaty links with other issues which, however legitimate and worthy, are irrelevant to the nuclear test ban treaty as such.

These four central issues from now on should command most of our attention if we are to come up in time with a workable formulation likely to command consensus support. From the very outset of the negotiations, we have been perfectly aware of the cruciality and sensitive nature of these issues due to their implications for legitimate security interest of States. We were certainly aware of them when at the fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly in November 1995 we decided to have the CTBT ready for signature "as soon as possible in 1996". Are we not now obligated to translate that decision into practical and constructive action in order to keep the target date we have set for these negotiations?

Let us realistically assess what, if any, the practical chances are of completing these negotiations on schedule. The time has come for us to break out from the vicious circle, to stop hiding behind bracketed formulas and delaying, for as long as possible, the necessary compromise on the most fundamental issues. In the view of my delegation, the hope for an early breakthrough on such issues need not and should not prevent us from a serious and constructive effort to produce a clean CTBT text free of brackets. Let us, therefore, be open and generous to fresh approaches, like the one suggested by yourself, Mr. President.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Poland for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria, Ambassador Meghlaoui.

Mr. MEGHLAOUI (Algeria) (translated from French): Mr. President, I asked for the floor in my capacity as coordinator of the Group of 21, which once again wishes to address the question of nuclear disarmament. In this connection you will recall that the Group of 21 has already made a statement on the agenda and organization of work of the 1995 session of the Conference on Disarmament, published in document CD/1359 on 22 September 1995. In that statement the Group of 21 rightly recalled that in the course of the debate that took place in the Conference it had consistently advocated the inclusion in the agenda of a separate item on nuclear disarmament and the opening of negotiations on this issue, which the international community has given the highest priority. Consequently it requested that, as a matter of priority, an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament should be established at the beginning of 1996.

In another statement made on 23 January 1996, the G.21 reiterated the same request, having expressed its regret following the refusal of certain member States of the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate on the issue of nuclear disarmament within the context of the Conference, which is the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament issues.

The Group of 21 thanks you, Mr. President, for all the efforts you have made to try to forge a consensus on this important issue of nuclear disarmament, as indeed it thanks your predecessor, Ambassador Aye of Myanmar. Both of you have conducted intensive consultations and you, Mr. President, like your predecessor, are certainly going to share with us the results of the efforts undertaken within your mandate.

Today the Group of 21 puts the following decision before the Conference on Disarmament for adoption.

(continued in English):

"The Group of 21 proposes that the Conference on Disarmament adopt the following decision:

"'The Conference on Disarmament decides to establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, to commence negotiations on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament for the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time.

"'The Conference decides to appoint _____ as the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee during its 1996 session'.

"The Group of 21 further proposes that this decision be adopted by the Conference on Disarmament during the first part of its 1996 session. The negotiations in the framework of this Ad Hoc Committee should commence immediately after the conclusion of the CTBT negotiations in 1996."

(Mr. Meghlaoui, Algeria)

(continued in French)

It is the keen wish and hope of the Group of 21 that the President will take up this important issue within consultations at the Conference on Disarmament. The Group of 21 requests that this text should be considered as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Algeria for his statement. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage?

I should now like to bring to the attention of the Conference the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban that it undertake inter-sessional work during the periods 1-4 April and 6-10 May 1996. May I take it that the Conference adopts this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: Before adjourning the meeting, and as my term of office as President of the Conference on Disarmament is drawing to a close, allow me to make some final remarks.

At the beginning of my tenure I indicated that it was my intention to continue to consult on some of the outstanding issues that are before this Conference, namely on the question of nuclear disarmament and the question of the expansion of the membership of the Conference. I also expressed my intention to stay in touch with Ambassador Meghlaoui of Algeria in his capacity as Special Coordinator on the agenda. Today, at the last meeting of the plenary under my presidency, I wish to look back at the past few weeks and share some thoughts with you on the outcome of my endeavours.

As you will remember, my predecessor, Ambassador Aye of Myanmar, having heard the various positions on the question of nuclear disarmament, took it upon himself to conduct intensive consultations with a view to developing a basis for consensus on this issue. As such a basis could not be identified at the end of his tenure, he recommended that successive presidents continue the process of consultations on nuclear disarmament. I have followed his recommendation and decided, as part of what I saw as my responsibilities as President of the Conference, to consult further on this issue. So I embarked upon a series of consultations in order to ascertain whether a basis could be found on which to take up this question in the Conference.

I should first say that a possible role for the CD in the field of nuclear disarmament, other than items already under consideration by the Conference, such as the comprehensive test-ban treaty and the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, which are aspects of nuclear disarmament, does not seem to be excluded for the future. On the other hand, for the immediate future, I have not been able to identify a commonality of views on whether and how work on nuclear disarmament in general in the Conference could start. While a number of suggestions were made with regard to the format in which this issue

could be addressed, ranging from informal consultations to the establishment of an ad hoc committee with a negotiating mandate, there was no consensus on a role as such for the Conference in relation to nuclear disarmament in general.

With regard to the question of expansion of the membership of the Conference, I have also initiated a series of consultations both with members and non-members. During my consultations I have tried to establish whether early implementation of decision CD/1356 would be possible. Failing the possibility of such early implementation, I have tried, furthermore, to find out whether any other solution or partial solution to the expansion of CD membership would be possible. My consultations have shown that, much to my regret, the implementation of the decision contained in CD/1356 was not yet possible. Other proposals in this respect, such as the one proposed in CD/1362, were not susceptible of commanding consensus either. Some suggestions were made for other solutions or partial solutions, but none of these had come to sufficient fruition during my tenure to discuss with the different groups or in the Conference.

In my opening remarks at the beginning of my presidency I expressed my special interest in the issue of the review of the agenda of the Conference. In the last few weeks I had a number of opportunities to exchange views on this issue with the Special Coordinator, Ambassador Meghlaoui. I am pleased to learn that in his consultations he is beginning to see the contours of a more rationalized agenda and I would encourage him to continue his consultations. Obviously, his work cannot be seen entirely in isolation from the consultations of the President of the Conference, in particular with regard to the question of nuclear disarmament.

Considering the outcome of my consultations of the last few weeks, I would like to recommend to the incoming President, Ambassador Abuah of Nigeria, as my predecessor did to me, to continue the process of consultations on nuclear disarmament. As far as expansion of membership is concerned, it is of course decision CD/1356 itself which stipulates that "the Conference will review the situation following the presentation of progress reports by the President on ongoing consultations at the end of each part of its annual session".

When taking up my duties as President of the Conference, I said that my responsibilities as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban would never be far from my mind. It is gratifying to note that it was precisely during my presidency that a renewed sense of urgency manifested itself with regard to early completion of the negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Following the tabling of two drafts of a complete treaty text, in large part based on the existing "rolling text", an impressive number of delegations made an urgent appeal to intensify and to speed up the negotiating process. There is no denying that, if we want to meet the target date the international community has given us and be able to sign the comprehensive test-ban treaty at the outset of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly next September, we will have to change gear.

The President

At the end of my presidency I would like to thank all delegations for their close cooperation and support during the past four weeks. Without that support it would not have been possible for me to fulfil effectively the responsibilities of my twin capacities as President of the Conference and as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban. I also would like to extend my gratitude to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, his deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, and their staff in the CD secretariat, as well as the interpreters in front of me. Their assistance was vital to me in the past weeks! Finally, I wish my successor, Ambassador Abuah from Nigeria, a fruitful and successful presidency. He can count on my full support.

The secretariat has circulated, at my request, a tentative timetable of meetings for next week. As you will see, an additional plenary meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, 19 March in order that the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, may address the Conference. This timetable is, as usual, merely indicative and subject to change if necessary. On this understanding, may I assume that the timetable is acceptable?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to remind you that, in accordance with the timetable of meetings for this week, this plenary meeting will be followed immediately by a meeting of the Friends of the Chair on IDC and IMS of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 19 March 1996 at 10 a.m. and, in view of the Secretary-General's heavy schedule, it would be greatly appreciated if the meeting could start promptly.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.

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CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.730
19 March 1996

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND THIRTIETH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 19 March 1996, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Abuah (Nigeria)

GE.96-60903 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I call to order the 730th meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Today, Nigeria assumes the presidency of this Conference. This event is an honour for me and my country. Throughout our history as a nation, we have contributed to the promotion of cherished ideals of international peace and security. In Africa and in the wider world, our record is ample and recognized. Our effective participation in the Conference on Disarmament and constructive advocacy for all forms of disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament, clearly reflect the consistency of our national policy.

In approximately three weeks, Nigeria will join other African countries in Cairo to sign the treaty establishing the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Pelindaba Treaty). The treaty is Africa's contribution to non-proliferation. Let me observe that the distinguished Secretary-General of the United Nations, Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, was one of the architects of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. This is why I am delighted that here today, in this Council chamber, the Conference on Disarmament is very pleased to welcome, in our midst, His Excellency Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Conference was privileged to receive him last July. That he can spare some of his valuable time to share with us his thoughts, and to offer his wise counsel about the imperatives of making our world safer and more secure, stress once again the internationally held view that we in the Conference on Disarmament should persevere, in spite of all difficulties, to conclude our negotiations for a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty by June 1996.

I now give the floor to the distinguished Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Mr. BOUTROS-GHALI (Secretary-General of the United Nations): Let me congratulate you for your presidency, and allow me to speak in French.

(continued in French)

I should like, first, to express my sincere gratitude to you for organizing this special meeting of the Conference which has allowed me to join you. I fully realize that, given the ongoing negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, your Conference has a very busy schedule. That is precisely why I decided to speak to you today. I want to tell you with the utmost solemnity how much importance I attach to the success of these negotiations.

In my message to you at the start of your annual session, as your President has stressed, I emphasized that nothing should divert you from your goal, and that it was imperative to conclude a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty by June 1996.

The first part of your annual session will close at the end of this month. My message has not changed. It has even acquired renewed urgency. It is essential that you go beyond certain differences of opinion, however great

they may be. For we must seize this opportunity to bring to a conclusion more than 30 years of effort directed at ensuring that all nuclear testing will be banned by international law.

The Conference on Disarmament has demonstrated in the past that it could tackle with determination the political and legal challenges and technical difficulties associated with negotiating a treaty of international significance. It demonstrated this again quite recently with the negotiation of the Convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons. On that occasion it clearly showed itself to be equal to its task as the sole body for multilateral negotiation in the field of disarmament. I am certain that today, you will make further progress along this path.

For the first time since consideration of a nuclear test ban began in 1962, all the major protagonists - including the five nuclear Powers - are actively involved in the negotiations. And everyone is convinced that the Conference is the only forum within which such negotiations can be conducted. Indeed, the political and geographical balance of its membership, and the special arrangements which have been made to allow more than 50 non-member States to participate in it, make the Conference a forum for negotiation that is unique of its kind and guarantees that all viewpoints will be heard.

But flexibility and the political will to achieve compromise will be essential. It is this above all that I wish to emphasize today. For there is no time to lose. Today we know that the opportunity is there and that we must seize it. During the first 50 years of its existence, the United Nations appealed to the nuclear Powers to desist from their frantic competition to produce ever more powerful and ever more sophisticated nuclear weapons, and called upon them to start reducing their immense arsenals, rather than increasing them. At the same time, great efforts were being made to prevent those weapons from proliferating throughout the planet.

Today, with the end of the cold war, great progress has been made in the field of nuclear disarmament. Henceforth, the two major nuclear States are no longer aiming strategic missiles at each other. The United States and the Russian Federation, responding to the pleas of the world's peoples, have embarked on a process of real nuclear disarmament. Today, we no longer live in a world haunted by the terror of an atomic war. The majority of the nuclear Powers have abandoned the practice of nuclear tests.

For the first time since the dawn of the nuclear age, we can hold a real discussion on the progressive reduction of nuclear arms, pending the complete and total elimination of such weapons. The goal is no longer to manufacture more weapons, but to reduce their numbers with a view to their elimination.

The comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty would be an additional means to enshrine the end of the cold war in positive international law. It would give new impetus to nuclear disarmament, and would make an invaluable contribution to the non-proliferation regime. It would also constitute an impediment to all qualitative development of nuclear weapons, since perfecting new nuclear weapons presupposes the carrying out of further nuclear tests. A comprehensive test ban should prevent States from developing such new weapons.

(Mr. Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the United Nations)

Today, the international community clearly recognizes that nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons are in the interests of all States, whether or not they have such weapons. This was affirmed by the 175 States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons when they took the major decision to make the Treaty not only a permanent expression of their commitment to non-proliferation, but also proof of their resolve to adopt new nuclear disarmament measures "with determination", and to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty "no later than 1996". That decision gave rise to great hopes that the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty would be rapidly concluded. Last December, the General Assembly of the United Nations reaffirmed that it considered this a priority, and requested your Conference to complete its work before its next session.

I have followed your work closely, and I am happy to see that the Conference has re-established the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban. That has made it possible to extend the areas upon which consensus has been reached, to include new group proposals in the negotiations, and to give an impetus and a new focus to your work.

It is not for me to go into the details of your negotiations, but I wish to emphasize one issue which appears to me to be essential, concerning the scope of the future treaty. The considerable political progress made last year in this area must be consolidated. A broad consensus has already emerged on the proposal that all explosions, however small, must be banned. There can therefore be no acceptable threshold. This is a completely satisfactory development, and the international community expected nothing less. Everyone is aware of the special responsibility which the nuclear Powers have in this area. I therefore urge them in particular to ensure that the treaty really deserves its name - that it provides for a truly "comprehensive" ban on nuclear tests.

Today you have begun a race against time. The conclusion of the treaty cannot be deferred any longer. It must be concluded this year. Otherwise a severe blow will be dealt to the nuclear non-proliferation regime, and thereby to peace and security as a whole. Once again, I ask you all, whether you represent a large country or a small country, a nuclear State or a non-nuclear State, to show flexibility, open-mindedness, a spirit of compromise and the will to succeed.

As for myself, I can assure you that despite the financial crisis I will do everything in my power to help you. As soon as the treaty is concluded, I will submit it to the General Assembly for signature. I shall also make sure that the United Nations helps prospective signatories of the treaty with the preparation for its implementation.

My duty today is therefore to urge you to succeed. The world is watching your negotiations! The entire international community looks to you to conclude this treaty! Do not underestimate the historic work upon which you are engaged on the difficult journey towards nuclear disarmament. Your success will represent a triumph for future generations, and for all humanity. You must succeed!

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Secretary-General for his important statement and for the encouraging words addressed to the Conference.

I should like to remind you that this plenary meeting will be followed by a meeting of the Friend of the Chair on On-site Inspection of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will take place on Thursday, 21 March 1996 at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.

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CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.731
21 March 1996

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIRST PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 21 March 1996, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Abuah (Nigeria)

GE.96-60923 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 731st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset, allow me to extend a warm welcome on behalf of the Conference, and on my own behalf, to our guest speakers today: the Foreign Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs of India, Mr. Salman Haidar; the Deputy Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Mexico, Ambassador Sergio González Gálvez; and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, His Excellency Gennadi Udovenko. The presence of these distinguished visitors among us today, especially at this juncture in the work of the Conference, is further evidence of the importance they attach to the multilateral approach to arms limitation and disarmament and to the successful conclusion of our negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty. I am sure that their statements will be followed with keen interest.

I also have on my list of speakers for today the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Cooperative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events, Dr. Ola Dahlman, and the representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Italy. However, before giving the floor to the first speaker, allow me to make a few opening remarks.

As you will all agree, my predecessors as President of the Conference on Disarmament gave of their best to ensure that the objectives of the Conference were upheld in the best diplomatic tradition. Accordingly, I believe I speak for all of you if I pay special tribute to them, especially Ambassador Aye of Myanmar and Ambassador Jaap Ramaker of the Netherlands. They were both diligent in applying their diplomatic skills in handling the delicate consultations on the many sensitive issues before the Conference. I thank them for helping along the process in which we are all engaged.

Please recall that, in his closing remarks, last Thursday, Ambassador Ramaker identified the outstanding issues before the Conference, namely, the question of nuclear disarmament, expansion of the Conference and the review of the agenda. While all these issues are deserving of equal attention, it is to our continuing negotiations for a comprehensive test-ban treaty that I must now first turn.

I noticed that since the commencement of the 1996 session, there have been 94 statements all of which touched or focused on the negotiations. At the 727th plenary meeting, held on 29 February 1996, there were 32 interventions, all of which concentrated on the Iranian draft treaty text and the Australian model treaty. The raison d'être for the two texts was to speed up the negotiations. Taken together with the comments on the rolling text, there is indeed great enthusiasm and broad support for early conclusion of the negotiations. We should now translate that enthusiasm and broad support into concrete action through the elimination of the many brackets that still hold up consensus adoption of the treaty. In this context, I must recall the inspiring statement of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, delivered here two days ago, in which he reminded us that the Conference was racing against time. I hope I can count on your support in our collective and certainly important endeavour to have a clear and agreed treaty text ready for signature by June 1996.

(The President)

An important issue which has featured in this Conference is the subject of nuclear disarmament. The question as to whether the Conference should consider the issue and what mechanism to utilize for that purpose has not been agreed, despite extensive consultations by my predecessor. Nevertheless, I intend to carry the consultations forward and therefore appeal for your cooperation to ensure a generally acceptable decision. It would, indeed, give all of us in the Conference some satisfaction if agreement can be reached by the Conference to discuss and to negotiate nuclear disarmament measures, including a phased programme for the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons.

The expansion of the membership of the Conference continues to be deadlocked in spite of our decision contained in CD/1356. Broader participation of those which have applied for membership of the Conference as full members will achieve two objectives, namely reflect the post-cold-war changes and enhance the legitimacy of our decisions. Accordingly, I shall continue the consultations and explore other modalities to break the deadlock. It would, indeed, satisfy the 23 States and many members of the CD if we are able to report that the decision contained in CD/1356 can, after all, be fully implemented. But even then, this Conference should not forget that the question of membership of the 13 States is still outstanding.

I am pleased that the Conference has started to look beyond the CTBT negotiations. To this end, Ambassador Meghlaoui of Algeria is moving ahead with his consultations on the review of the agenda. We all look forward to his proposals which, I expect, should take into account enduring disarmament priorities. Let me assure him of my full cooperation.

As you know, the presidency of Nigeria will span the remaining part of the first session and the beginning of the second session of the Conference. Yet, there does not seem to be enough time to consult and reach broad agreement on these weighty issues which require our decision. To this end, the critical variables that will determine the way forward to our collective success, in my view, consist of flexibility, understanding and political will by all, on every issue.

I should now like to give the floor to the Foreign Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs of India, Mr. Salman Haidar.

Mr. HAIDAR (India): Mr. President, I am delighted to have the opportunity of addressing the Conference on Disarmament under your presidency. I have had the pleasure of being closely associated with you at the United Nations in times past and I am well aware of your high diplomatic skills and ability. I would like to assure you of the fullest cooperation of the Indian delegation in your endeavours. I also take the opportunity to extend to His Excellency Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the CD, and Mr. Bensmail, Deputy Secretary-General of the CD, our appreciation of their untiring efforts to ensure that this Conference achieves its intended goals.

In a few days, the first session of the Conference on Disarmament will draw to a close. At this stage we need to take stock and consider our

future course of action. We have seen intense negotiations during the first nine weeks and we salute the tireless efforts of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador Ramaker, and his colleagues Ambassador Berdennikov and Ambassador Zahran, as well as other Friends of the Chair. We are glad to see that progress has been registered in many areas, including some of the organizational aspects, the architecture of the international monitoring system and some elements of on-site inspection. Many delegations have spoken about the need to complete the treaty speedily. We share this intent. Nevertheless, we note with concern that large gaps remain in areas which we believe are central to the purpose of this treaty. To our regret, the opportunity has not been taken during this part of the session of the Conference adequately to address these key issues which merit the most serious attention.

The negotiations on CTBT in this particular forum may have begun in 1994 but, as we are all aware, there have been many negotiations on the subject over several decades. The absence of a shared approach at crucial times prevented a successful outcome. Since 1994, we have a sharp and explicit mandate to negotiate a treaty which would address the objectives of nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects and nuclear disarmament in a balanced way. As we adjourn in a few days, it is necessary that delegations and capitals reflect on the means of obtaining a satisfactory outcome when we resume. We need a shared approach if we are to avoid an incomplete result.

From the start India has followed a consistent policy on the CTBT. We believed then, and are even more convinced today, that a CTBT should bring about a halt to the qualitative development, upgrading and improvement of nuclear weapons and should also mark the first irreversible step on the road towards genuine nuclear disarmament within a time-bound framework. You yourself, Mr. President, have referred to this issue in your opening remarks.

When India proposed the standstill agreement on nuclear testing in 1954, about 60 tests had been carried out; the number of designs was limited and extensive testing was necessary to develop new designs. The scientific and technological environment has altered vastly in the intervening period. More than 2,000 tests have now been carried out. Many designs, it is reported, have been tested and are lying in reserve with the weapons designers. Till less than a year ago, nuclear-weapon States held that they needed hydronuclear tests for safety and reliability purposes. We had disagreed. These tests are now not thought to be necessary. We are still told that other planned experiments and tests will not lead to qualitative development of nuclear weapons. It would surely be unacceptable if, after almost four decades of effort, we achieved a treaty which left open a route to improve or upgrade nuclear weapons or to develop and refine designs for new weapons. We believe that the CTBT should be truly comprehensive and that technical limitations of the present verification technologies should not be allowed to constrain our efforts towards this objective.

Even while the current negotiations were in progress we witnessed disturbing developments that appeared to indicate an intention that nuclear weapons should be here to stay. New justifications for the retention of these weapons were put forward and new roles were envisaged for them. We voiced our

(Mr. Haidar, India)

concern at these developments, and after careful consideration, put forward certain proposals which are designed to ensure that the CTBT is indeed an integral step in a time-bound process of global nuclear disarmament. These are concrete and substantive proposals. They will need to be addressed as they are essential in defining the nature of the treaty and its effectiveness as an instrument of disarmament. I trust the Conference will engage on these issues in a serious and purposive manner, so that we can take advantage of the window of opportunity which exists today.

Last week, India, along with other members of the Group of 21, put forward a formal proposal calling for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament to commence negotiations on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament for the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time. This proposal was tabled after two months of Presidential consultations had unfortunately failed to achieve consensus on the subject. Nuclear disarmament is not the concern of one group of countries alone but is of universal relevance. We realize that nuclear weapons cannot be eliminated overnight. But surely, in today's world, conditions exist to begin negotiations on this primary disarmament objective. Unwillingness to move in this direction, coupled with a reluctance to focus on the disarmament aspects of the CTBT text, would raise doubt about the level of commitment to the disarmament agenda. A CTBT shorn of its disarmament context will be only an arms control treaty designed to perpetuate reliance on nuclear weapons by those countries who have concluded extensive testing programmes.

India's objectives are different. We do not believe that the acquisition of nuclear weapons is essential for national security, and we have followed a conscious decision in this regard. We are also convinced that the existence of nuclear weapons diminishes international security. We, therefore, seek their complete elimination. These are fundamental precepts that have been an integral basis of India's foreign and national security policy. It shall, therefore, remain our endeavour in the coming months to try to ensure that the disarmament agenda is not lost in a purely non-proliferation agenda.

As this part of the session draws to an end, it affords us time to reflect. We have to be fully conscious of the task which faces us. This is not the mere mechanical task of completing a text but the need to place the CTBT - a treaty of far-reaching significance - in its proper context of nuclear disarmament, as an integral step towards the elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework. India will continue to contribute all its efforts to achieve this goal so that the international community attains a treaty which truly serves the needs of international peace and security.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Foreign Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs of India for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I give the floor to the Deputy Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Mexico, Ambassador González Gálvez.

Mr. GONZALEZ GALVEZ (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Although the representative of Mexico in this forum has already explained the position of my country on this topic, today I should like to distract you for a few minutes basically to reaffirm our support for the importance of the task before us.

I am of course pleased, sir, to congratulate you on taking up the presidency of this forum at a time of particular significance for the negotiations on the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. It is not the first time that Nigeria and Mexico have united their efforts to move forward the cause of disarmament. We have trust in your leadership and experience. You can rely on the full cooperation of my delegation, as can the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee and the chairmen of the working groups, whose efforts we support so as to achieve in good time the conclusion of the treaty which has been so long awaited and so much desired.

I listened closely to the statement by the Foreign Secretary of India, Mr. Salman Haidar. His presence in this forum is yet another demonstration of the interest raised by the work of the Conference on Disarmament and the crucial point reached in the negotiations on the topic in which we are engaged.

It is a characteristic feature of the end of this century and this millennium that the international community is taking intensive action together on the basis of shared values. Foremost among these values is the imperative that nuclear tests must cease for all time and in all environments, and constitute an important milestone along the path towards the definitive elimination of nuclear weapons within as specific a programme as possible. The General Assembly of the United Nations expressed this feeling of the international community in 1993 when, for the first time unanimously, it called for the negotiation of a universal, internationally and effectively verifiable comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. We endorsed this aim at the NPT Review and Extension Conference in 1995 and we reiterated that position in the General Assembly of the United Nations last year when we set a binding date to achieve our objective - the second part of the present annual session of the Conference on Disarmament.

If international public opinion has been demanding a halt to nuclear tests for the past 32 years, it has done so because it links this issue with the dangers of horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons and the nightmare of the development of ever more devastating and deadly weapons. Nevertheless, technological progress in the last four decades has meant that a comprehensive nuclear test ban has implications relating to vertical and horizontal non-proliferation that are different from the original ones, as well as a different political meaning. On the one hand, as regards vertical non-proliferation, the great majority of non-nuclear-weapon States - almost all of them - have already entered into a commitment not to carry out nuclear tests in other treaties which have universal ambitions or regional significance. A comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty would therefore involve new obligations only for the nuclear States and a very small number of non-nuclear-weapon States with a special level of technological development.

However, it is a fact that a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty would not in itself constitute an obstacle to horizontal proliferation given that such tests are not essential for the production of first-generation nuclear weapons. Indeed, one of the only two nuclear weapons that have ever been used was not previously tested. The purpose of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty is to prevent the development of new nuclear weapons. Hence the nature of the treaty is that it will put an end to the qualitative proliferation of nuclear weapons. It clearly forms a part of the efforts to halt the nuclear arms race as an essential preliminary step within a process of nuclear disarmament. That is why it is so important for the scope of the treaty to be sufficiently broad to provide an assurance that its entry into force will truly and definitively stop the development of technologies that could substantially improve the design of nuclear weapons or aid the development of new nuclear weapons.

If a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty does not have the same technical implications today as those which were hoped for 30 years ago, its political importance is just as great because of the significance that this measure would have as an effective step towards reducing the nuclear threat. Mexico's participation in the negotiations is geared towards finding consensus approaches that guarantee the universality of the treaty that we all seek. Negotiations in this first part of the annual session have brought to light a number of difficulties that require major and urgent political decisions if we are to keep to our timetable. The first difficulty seems to lie in the degree to which the cessation of nuclear testing can be linked with nuclear disarmament. We understand that there is no fundamental conceptual difference and that all the negotiators agree that a ban on nuclear testing constitutes an essential step in a nuclear disarmament process. Therefore, it is not easy to grasp, on the one hand, the absolute refusal to accept a reference to the need for a nuclear disarmament programme, nor does it seem reasonable to deny that the nuclear test ban has a value in itself and call for a linkage to a legally binding process of nuclear disarmament. It is time to show flexibility if we really wish to attain our objective.

A second difficulty lies in what are termed peaceful nuclear explosions. The comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty that we are striving for should not contain asymmetrical obligations. If these nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes are allowed, such explosions could be carried out by only a very small number of States. In addition, given the level of technological development in this area there would be no way to guarantee that peaceful nuclear explosions were not also used for military research purposes. However, we wish to see a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty of indefinite duration. We understand the argument that in the future technological progress may perhaps guarantee that nuclear explosions could be used only for peaceful purposes, and we do not rule out future modifications to international commitments to place such peaceful explosions within the reach of all States. In the future everything is possible - even the amendment of the treaty that we hope to sign this year by means of a special clause for that purpose. That is why the absence of any mention of peaceful nuclear explosions does not in our view mean that this option is ruled out.

(Mr. González Gálvez, Mexico)

Another difficulty that has been identified concerns the entry into force of the treaty. We would like to reiterate that a CTBT cannot be asymmetrical or discriminatory. It is clear that the treaty will be effective when it is subscribed to by those few States which, as we have said before, are so far not tied by legally binding commitments that prevent them from carrying out nuclear tests. However, political will on the part of those States alone should be sufficient and form a basis for commitments that could very well be adopted outside the context of the treaty, without the need to make entry into force dependent on ratification by a specific number of States.

Last year, at the conclusion of the NPT Review and Extension Conference, I had occasion on behalf of my country to explain the reasons that led Mexico to join in the decision to indefinitely extend the Treaty without a vote. Allow me to reiterate the position of my country now: "In deciding to extend the Treaty's validity indefinitely, we have not perpetuated the dichotomy between States with nuclear weapons and States without since this Conference has reaffirmed that in this context the Treaty's very objective is the total elimination of all nuclear weapons. For this reason, we wish to stress the importance of the commitment that the States parties undertook ... to redouble their efforts to reach that goal ... through systematic and progressive reductions and of their formal agreement to conclude negotiations on a treaty for a complete ban in 1996, with no exceptions whatsoever, on nuclear tests". In this regard, on 5 September 1995 the Government of Mexico declared: "It is obvious that if, in any of the periodic reviews, we reach the conclusion that the nuclear Powers are not complying with what they agreed to, we always have at our disposal the possibility of taking drastic measures, not excluding that of reconsidering our position vis-à-vis the Non-Proliferation Treaty, on the basis of article X of that international instrument." We cannot go on thinking of a world in which a few countries are possessors of nuclear weapons for the indefinite future. Sooner or later the number of countries asserting the same right would inexorably increase.

My Government is grateful to the Governments of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Australia for the very important contributions they have made to the ongoing negotiations. These two countries have shown us by their initiatives that it is possible to conclude a treaty on time and that there are different formulas to achieve our purpose.

The time has come for key political decisions to be taken. The treaty can be achieved with the necessary mutual understanding and essential flexibility. It is clear that States which are to enter into new commitments have legitimate security concerns which as far as possible should be addressed. But let us not forget that above and beyond the security needs of States, no matter how important these may be, lie the security needs of humanity, which call for a halt to nuclear explosions, a halt this year and for all time.

In closing, I wish to make reference to the topic of the expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament. My Government supports the immediate and unconditional admission of the 23 countries mentioned in the decision adopted last September. There is an urgent need for this Conference to increase its representativeness. In passing, I should like to conclude

(Mr. González Gálvez, Mexico)

with a thought that Mexico regards as very important. With the signing of the Pelindaba Treaty next month the entire southern hemisphere will be almost free of nuclear weapons. We are making progress towards the aim born with the Treaty of Tlatelolco of reducing areas of conflict through the proliferation of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Now Mexico has drawn the attention of the OPANAL Council to the desirability of instituting links and consultations with all countries which are members of regional treaties of this kind, following the example of cooperation that guided us at the last General Assembly in dealing with the issue of nuclear testing by France.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Deputy Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Mexico for his statement and for the kind words addressed to me. It is now an honour for me to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, His Excellency Mr. Udovenko, and invite him to deliver his statement from the podium.

Mr. UDOVENKO (Ukraine): It gives me great pleasure, Sir, to congratulate you on the assumption of your important functions, and I would like to wish you every success in their discharge. For many years, being Ambassador of Ukraine to the United Nations, I have closely cooperated with distinguished Nigerian diplomats like Ambassador Garba, Professor Cobrini, who headed the very important, at that time, Special Committee against Apartheid. They were Chairmen of this Committee and I was their Vice-Chairman. Through you, Mr. President, I would like to extend to them my best greetings and regards.

We, in Ukraine, highly appreciate the role which has been played by the CD in the field of multilateral disarmament. We also hope that future achievements of this forum will bring even more tangible results. Saying that, I mean, first of all, finalizing the text of the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty (CTBT). The international community has been already seeking this goal for several decades. During that time, more than 2,050 nuclear explosions have been conducted in the world. In many countries, public opinion was alarmed by nuclear-weapons tests pursued by some States and considered them as being hazardous for the health of people and posing a serious threat to the environment. In this context, we cannot but express our satisfaction with the decision taken by France to terminate its programme of nuclear-weapons tests and we call upon the People's Republic of China to follow suit.

On the whole, the period from the end of 1995 to the beginning of 1996 has, in our opinion, been characterized by notable changes in the reduction of armaments and positive developments in the field of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Ukraine welcomes the recent ratification of START II by the United States Senate and calls upon the Russian Federation to act likewise in the nearest future so that this important international legal document takes effect. Implementation of this instrument will make it possible for mankind to move towards achievement of the noble goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

In Ukraine's opinion, the signing of the Treaty on the creation of a nuclear-weapons-free zone in South-East Asia on 15 November 1995 by ASEAN States, Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos is a very promising fact. And we

(Mr. Udovenko, Ukraine)

also congratulate the distinguished Deputy Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Mexico on the statement he just made. Undoubtedly, a significant contribution to the process of nuclear disarmament will be made by the signing of the Pelindaba Treaty on the creation of a nuclear-weapons-free zone in Africa. I believe that the creation of such zones is an efficient tool for preventing horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. Such zones would have to be created in other parts of the globe as well.

I think it is not necessary to remind those sitting in this hall that Ukraine was the first State in the world which declared its intention to eliminate nuclear weapons deployed on its territory. This intention was codified in the Declaration of State Sovereignty, which was adopted in July 1990 during the existence of the Soviet Union. In that declaration, Ukraine declared that it would be a non-nuclear State. Such a decision was adopted under the conditions of the so-called "Chernobyl syndrome" and as a result of the deep understanding by our people of the terrible aftermath a nuclear disaster may bring about. Thus, the decision on acquiring non-nuclear status was taken by Ukraine voluntarily following the will of its people and not under pressure of other States, although we took into account the global tendency towards terminating the nuclear arms race, this reckless race along the road which might lead humanity to a collective suicide. Our decision was also influenced by the estimates having revealed that maintenance of the third largest nuclear arsenal in the world would cost Ukraine tremendous expenditures and would be a hard social burden for the country, especially if one takes into account that eliminating the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster absorbs a considerable share of the State budget. Actually, we pay from 8 to 10 per cent of the budget of Ukraine to Chernobyl victims, and as more years pass after the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, more victims appear in my country. A couple of days ago, the Secretary of State of the United States and I visited a hospital in Kiev where many young children with effects resulting from the Chernobyl nuclear disaster are treated, and we saw a child of, say, one month of age with a very bad lung which resulted, again, from the consequences of Chernobyl. The more years that pass after Chernobyl, for us in Ukraine, the more victims we discover, and children especially suffer greatly. These children are now aged 10, 12, 14, and I take this opportunity to remind people that since this terrible nuclear disaster took place, 10 years ago, in Chernobyl, we are still fighting the consequences of this terrible tragedy. And, not only for our people - this is a worldwide tragedy.

Solving these two problems - nuclear disarmament and Chernobyl - which are unprecedented from the point of view of their scale, necessitates the mobilization of enormous resources which, under a complicated economic situation due to the radical transformations in our country, require an adequate international response. We hope that leading world Powers will continue to render Ukraine assistance in this process and that these problems will be solved in the not-too-distant future through concerted efforts.

Ukraine, being one of the parties to the START I Treaty, strictly observes its provisions, as well as its obligation according to the Trilateral Statement by the Presidents of Russia, the United States and Ukraine. So, the day will come soon when the last nuclear warhead will be removed from our territory.

(Mr. Udovenko, Ukraine)

Thus, Ukraine, in spite of the relatively short period of its independence, has made a substantial contribution to the reduction of the nuclear threat and creation of a safer world. The importance of this contribution was recognized by the United Nations General Assembly in the resolution adopted last year. Ukraine will go down in history as the State which voluntarily refused nuclear weapons and firmly follows this path.

Therefore, our State is objectively interested in continuing and deepening arms reductions. Within this context we consider the conclusion of the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty as an extremely important element of the process of terminating the nuclear arms race. At the same time, we cannot support the inclusion in the text of the treaty of provisions which would establish a link between a nuclear test ban and nuclear disarmament. However attractive this interrelation is in practice, it might lead to the failure of the CTBT negotiations.

The "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament" adopted in May 1995 at the NPT Review Conference charted a realistic programme of movement to a world free of nuclear weapons. Conclusion of the CTBT in 1996, and urgent resumption of the negotiations on the elaboration of the convention on the prohibition of production of fissile materials for military purposes should be the first steps on this road. We deeply regret the fact that the corresponding ad hoc committee was not established at the beginning of the CD's 1996 session, as it constitutes an example of the non-fulfilment of arrangements which were agreed upon at the NPT Review and Extension Conference and reflected in the above-mentioned "Principles and objectives for non-proliferation and disarmament" calling for the immediate start and earliest completion of these negotiations.

I would like to note that Ukraine supports the inclusion of nuclear disarmament as a separate item in the CD agenda. It is necessary, however, to think over an appropriate organizational format for discussing this problem at the CD and the eventual contribution the CD might make in solving this global problem. At this stage, the way towards its solution will go through the completion of the CTBT.

We are of the opinion that the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty should ban all nuclear explosions on the basis of the true "zero-yield" formula. We share the opinion expressed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in his address to the Conference on Disarmament on 19 March 1996, as to the need to ensure that this treaty, "really deserves its name - that it provides for a truly 'comprehensive' ban on nuclear tests". We think it inadmissible that this treaty would make exceptions for so-called "peaceful" nuclear explosions. Such exceptions will make problematic the implementation of its provisions as it would be impossible to detect whether the test has been made for military or "peaceful" purposes.

The future CTBT should incorporate a mechanism ensuring efficient control over its observance. The international monitoring system, comprising four monitoring technologies, should become the core of such a control mechanism. Ukraine has scientific and technical potential, as well as highly skilled

personnel, which are essential for verification activities. Our seismic station has been already included in the primary seismic monitoring network. We think that the IMS would also benefit from the inclusion of our infrasound stations in the corresponding monitoring network.

We share the opinion that on-site inspections should not be of a routine character, by analogy with the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. In general, when working on issues related to the creation of verification mechanisms, we should proceed from the principle of cost-effectiveness. In this connection, we advocate the establishment of a small-sized independent organization on CTBT which should be closely related to IAEA. Therefore, we support the idea of locating the organization in Vienna.

Last autumn, Ukraine welcomed a major decision, as reflected in document CD/1356, taken by the Conference on Disarmament to enlarge its membership based on the "O'Sullivan list". However, we are deeply disappointed over delays in the practical implementation by the CD of its own decision, in spite of the United Nations General Assembly's consensus resolution which invited the CD to take urgent measures for the implementation of this decision before its 1996 session.

It is our view that the situation when States that have made concrete contributions to the global reduction of armaments, including their deadliest types, remain outside the CD is not only incomprehensible but also unfair with regard to the peoples of these countries. We think that it is high time that CD member States fix the precise date of admission of new members mentioned in CD/1356. If such a date cannot be set during the first part of the session, I would suggest it should be done at the beginning of the second part of the current session.

Based on its vast experience in the field of arms control, its contribution to this process, its level of development of relevant technical and expertise capacities, Ukraine believes that it has all grounds to become a full member of the CD and participate directly in the elaboration of decisions which affect Ukrainian national interests and which can hardly be implemented to the full extent without the direct involvement of Ukraine in this Conference.

Admission of new members to the CD is an objective requirement corresponding to the realities of today's world. Such a decision has fundamental importance both for Ukraine and other candidate States. For the CD itself, it is a problem of its ability to find adequate answers to the challenges of our times and to carry out on this basis its important functions in furthering international cooperation in the disarmament field.

Without changing and transforming itself, while preserving the features of a club for the selected few, the Conference on Disarmament will be unable to increase its working potential so badly needed for resolving a number of urgent problems on its agenda. The Conference's activities cannot be effective unless appropriate decisions are elaborated on a truly universal basis.

(Mr. Udovenko, Ukraine)

In conclusion, I would like to wish productive work to the delegations and express our hope that it would result in the completion of the CTBT text before the end of the CD's session this year.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine for his important statement and for the kind words addressed to me and my countrymen. I now give the floor to Dr. Dahlman, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Cooperative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events, who will present the progress report on the forty-third session of the Group, as contained in document CD/1385.

Mr. DAHLMAN (Sweden): I am pleased to report to you on the meeting of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts which took place from 12 to 23 February 1996, and to introduce the progress report contained in CD/1385. Experts and representatives from 34 countries attended that session.

The main topic of the session was the evaluation of the first year of the Third Technical Test, which we refer to as GSETT-3. The Group finalized an evaluation report based on comprehensive work conducted by its Working Group on Evaluation, under the convenorship of Dr. Bernard Massinon of France. The full evaluation report is available as the Group's Conference Room Paper 262, and an executive summary of the report is annexed to the progress report.

It is in this context a pleasure to recognize the eminent services provided by the Group's secretary and the secretariat in preparing those reports and in supporting the Group's session.

The overall conclusion of this first year of GSETT-3 has successfully demonstrated that it is feasible to establish and operate an international seismological monitoring system based on the concept described in CD/1254. This concept is also the basis for the seismological part of the IMS in the NTB rolling text. The evaluation further confirms the system capability simulations carried out as part of the design work. This means that the expected capabilities of the system, to detect events with magnitude of 4 or above and to locate such events within 1,000 square kilometres, can be achieved where the station coverage is complete and when the IDC processing and analysis have been properly optimized and calibrated.

Participation in GSETT-3 steadily increased during 1995. The number of primary stations increased from 29 in January 1995 to 41 by the end of 1995. The corresponding numbers for the auxiliary stations are 34 in January and 76 by the end of 1995. As many as 45 countries contributed data during 1995 and GSETT-3 includes today stations on all continents. Thirty primary and 33 auxiliary stations in GSETT-3 are part of the envisaged IMS networks.

The International Data Centre is a central component of the envisaged IMS and the GSETT-3 IDC located in Arlington, Virginia, United States, has, with minor interruptions, been in continuous operation during 1995. This test operation has shown that the experimental IDC can fulfil the expected tasks of

routinely collecting and analysing the large amount of data contributed by participating stations and producing and distributing a set of defined products, useful for seismological monitoring and for system evaluation.

Participation in the third component of the GSETT-3 system, the national data centres (NDCs), also significantly increased during 1995. The NDCs have proven to be most essential not only to maintain reliable operations of stations and communication links but also to participate in the evaluation and calibration of the system. A large number of national contributions addressing these two latter issues were presented at the session.

The evaluation presented in the progress report is based on a large volume of data. The total data volume collected during this first year of GSETT-3 amounts to 900 billion information units, corresponding to some 300 million pages of information. From this huge amount of raw data just over 20,000 seismic events have been reported by the experimental IDC during 1995. Even if the station network is still far from complete in several regions of the world, this information flow represents a realistic load on the IDC and a good basis for the testing and evaluation of the data handling and analysis methods and computer algorithms.

As to the detection capability, it has been observed during 1995 that the system detects events with a magnitude of 3.5-4.0 with high probability in regions of the world where the planned GSETT-3 primary network is fully implemented. This is in agreement with the theoretical predictions made during the design of the network. In several areas of the world where the station coverage is still incomplete, the detection threshold is higher.

Also, the location capability varied from one region to another, depending on the station coverage. For regions where both the primary and the auxiliary station coverage approached the GSETT-3 network plan, two thirds of the reported events of magnitude 4 and above had a location uncertainty of 1,000 square kilometres or less. For areas poorly covered, only a fourth of the events were located with this accuracy.

The Group noted that the observed location capabilities are those of a system that does not yet have all the envisaged stations in operation and is not yet calibrated. The Group agreed that improved station coverage and calibration, to account for the heterogeneities within the Earth is a prerequisite to achieve a location accuracy of 1,000 square kilometres or better for events of magnitude 4 and above. The Group noted that for events with magnitudes below 4 the GSETT-3 networks may not generally achieve a location accuracy of 1,000 square kilometres or better even when calibrated. The network is simply not dense enough to obtain the necessary number of observations of events at such low magnitudes to achieve accurate locations.

The Ad Hoc Group noted that accurate depth estimation remained an area of concern during the first year of GSETT-3. The Group expects that reliable depth estimation will require further attention and notes that supplementary data from national networks will help calibrate the IDC depth estimation procedures.

(Mr. Dahlman, Sweden)

The Group took note of national investigations which demonstrated the synergy that could be achieved between seismic, hydroacoustic and infrasound observations. In particular, the Group noted that the inclusion of hydroacoustic data in GSETT-3 could contribute to significantly improved analysis of seismic events in oceanic areas.

As to the important issue of the cost of establishing and operating a monitoring system, the first year of GSETT-3 has given a fairly good account of the IDC operation as this has been well defined and focused on monitoring activities. The total capital investment, including research and development, of the IDC for handling and analysis of seismic data, has been about US$ 50 million. This includes some US$ 3 million during 1995. The operational cost of the IDC for GSETT-3 during 1995 was about US$ 7 million. The operation of stations and NDCs during GSETT-3 has in general been integrated with special monitoring agencies, national geophysical institutes and universities, some of which are already funded for other purposes. It is, therefore, difficult to accurately estimate their specific cost for GSETT-3. The experiences, however, generally confirm earlier estimates reported in CD/1254.

Even if a significant part of the envisaged seismic system is in operation today, it must be emphasized that it is an experimental system and that certain components of the system have to be improved. The future plan for the GSETT-3 system includes efforts to improve the quality and operational readiness of the system. In particular there is a need to improve the quality of automated processing and event location and to further develop event characterization parameters and user-friendly IDC products. A most important issue is to improve the accuracy of event location through the calibration of the individual regions using reference events with accurate locations provided by national or regional networks. There is also a need to improve the operational reliability of participating stations and to increase their up-times and to secure the authenticity of reported data.

GSETT-3 has not only demonstrated the feasibility of establishing and operating an international seismological monitoring system and provided a large amount of scientific and technological experience; it has also established an important infrastructure which could be directly incorporated into the IMS. To maintain and develop these extensive investments made in seismic stations worldwide and in the IDC prior to and during GSETT-3 is an important remaining task for the Group of Scientific Experts. To deliver those facilities in an operational mode to the envisaged Preparatory Commission would be a valuable contribution to the establishment of the IMS in a cost-effective way.

The Ad Hoc Group therefore recommends that GSETT-3 continues until the envisaged Preparatory Commission assumes responsibility, including financing, for the work of establishing the IMS. The Group agreed that the GSETT-3 network should be gradually modified to approach the envisaged IMS network. States should therefore ensure the continued operation of their stations participating in GSETT-3 and envisaged to be incorporated in the IMS and the transmission of data from these stations to the experimental IDC.

(Mr. Dahlman, Sweden)

The Group further recommends that the GSETT-3 IDC begin using the infrastructure developed for GSETT-3 and the experience gained from it to support integration of other monitoring technologies envisaged for the IMS. The resulting analyses could be reflected in the GSETT-3 IDC bulletins and thus be available to experts from all IMS technologies.

The Group agreed that another remaining task for GSE is to increase the knowledge of seismic monitoring and the operation of a global monitoring system among scientists around the world. As part of that effort a regional workshop for Africa is planned to take place in South Africa in late April and the possibility of convening a similar workshop for South-East Asia is also being considered. To have knowledgeable experts available in many countries is a prerequisite to obtaining a credible global verification system. GSETT-3 could, in this perspective, be looked upon as a large, global training exercise in which all countries can participate, especially in calibration and evaluation.

The Ad Hoc Group suggests that its next session, subject to approval by the Conference on Disarmament, should be convened from 20 to 24 May 1996. The main issue to be considered is a plan for the calibration of the networks. A draft work programme for the next session is annexed to the progress report.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Cooperative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events for his statement. I intend to put to the Conference for decision the recommendation contained in paragraph 24 of the Group's report, concerning the proposed dates of its next session, that is, 20-24 May 1996, at our next plenary meeting on Tuesday, 26 March.

I should now like to give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mr. Han.

Mr. HAN (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, I would like, first of all, to warmly congratulate you on your assumption of the last presidency of the first part of the 1996 session of the Conference on Disarmament, and express the conviction that this session will owe much of its success to your skill. I assure you, the representative from friendly Nigeria, of the full support and cooperation of my delegation in discharging your work.

Today, the CD assumes great responsibility and tasks to solve many outstanding issues in the field of disarmament. It is not easy to deal with those questions of how to advance the ritual items discussed so far, how to cope with the more acute problems and how to accommodate varying views and ideas. The people of the world aspire to a peaceful and independent life in the present circumstances where bipolar confrontation has ceased and hope that substantial and practical steps are taken in the CD to remove the aftermath of the cold war. What is particularly called for is to completely get rid of the nuclear threat which all people, from the child to the old, feel commonly.

(Mr. Han, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

In fact, the CD has been carrying on its work with its emphasis on the removal of the nuclear threat and nuclear disarmament not only in the past, when the nuclear arms race was serious, but also today when the cold war structure has been destroyed. Most proposals concerning nuclear disarmament were tabled by the non-nuclear-weapon States. The non-nuclear-weapon States proposed nuclear-free zones and demanded negative security assurances long ago in order to safeguard themselves from the nuclear threat.

It is in this vein that the Government of DPRK proposed in the late 1970s to make north-east Asia a nuclear-free zone and in the middle of 1980s to make the Korean peninsula a nuclear-weapon-free zone, taking into account the fact that the Korean peninsula has become the confrontation ground of the nuclear Powers, and the Government has done its best to realize the proposal.

With regard to the establishment of nuclear-free zones, my delegation takes this opportunity to express its compliments to the African countries for the fact that they will sign in Cairo in April this year the treaty on the nuclear-weapon-free zone of Africa to become the first nuclear-weapon-free continent.

The non-nuclear States have called, on all occasions, for the cessation of nuclear tests, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, assurances against the first use of nuclear weapons, prohibition of production and use of nuclear weapons, nuclear disarmament and the total abolition of nuclear weapons for world peace and security. They also insisted on abolishing unjust concepts and theories for the sake of justification of nuclear weapons and destroying dangerous formulas such as the protection of the nuclear umbrella which are only supporting the stand for the possession of nuclear weapons, and appealed not to accept such concepts and formulas. However, the last several decades have not seen any solution of the issues, but rather nuclear weapons have been improved by the introduction of sophisticated technology in terms of both quality and quantity. Therefore, it is worth noting that many non-nuclear-weapon States are pondering the implications of a CTBT, a top priority for the CD.

The demand for a nuclear test ban was made at the time of the nuclear arms race, in order to circumvent such consequences of the nuclear profile of today, and this demand should have been met already long ago and the top priority of negotiation at present should have been nuclear disarmament and abolition of nuclear weapons. In practical terms, the nuclear threat comes more from the very existence of nuclear weapons themselves now deployed even on the launching pad around the world, rather than the nuclear test. From this viewpoint, my delegation fully shares the stand of many non-nuclear-weapon States to define clearly the idea of nuclear disarmament in the CTBT and in particular the proposal of the Group of 21 made on 14 March 1996.

Amelioration of tension and achievement of peace are the preconditions for disarmament. We, the Korean people, who live in constant tension and danger of war, feel stronger than others about this. The CD also deals with the disarmament issue within the framework of maintenance of peace. Today, we are pleased to see the solution, or the process of solution, of disputes and

(Mr. Han, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

conflicts in several parts of the world and we welcome them. The situation on the Korean peninsula, however, contrasts, to a great degree, with these positive developments. There is no meaningful change in terms of tensions and the armistice, an outcome of the cold war, records the longest periods of 43 years in modern history.

The Korean Armistice Agreement stipulates that "within three months after the Armistice Agreement is signed and becomes effective, a political conference of a higher level of both sides be held to settle through negotiation the questions of the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Korea, the peaceful settlement of the Korean question, etc.", but it was not implemented, and only 9 paragraphs of the first article out of 63 paragraphs of 5 articles remain valid and the other paragraphs were abrogated. The function of the Military Armistice Commission, a single supervisory mechanism for implementation of the Armistice Agreement, has been totally paralysed. This indicates that, legally, armistice goes back to a war. Practically, it is now impossible in this vacuum to stop the large-scale introduction of sophisticated military equipment and arms and the staging almost every day of military exercises under various kinds of names.

The belligerent relations between the parties to the Armistice Agreement continue unchanged. There is no guarantee that any accident in the area will not result in a war. It is, therefore, a very urgent issue to take steps designed to maintain peace and security in the Korean peninsula and in Asia and the Pacific.

The Government of DPRK put forward two years ago the proposal to establish a new peace mechanism in Korea and on 22 February this year made a further concrete proposal in consideration of the position of the other side, that is, to conclude a tentative agreement aimed at removing armed conflict and war danger and maintaining the armistice peacefully, set up a joint military apparatus involving the real parties to the Armistice Agreement, in order to supervise the implementation of a tentative agreement and hold DPRK-United States negotiation at an appropriate level to discuss the above-mentioned issues. In the light of the seriousness of the situation and the responsibility therefrom, this proposal cannot be refused from the way of cold war thinking. If this proposal were implemented, it would pave the way for easing tensions and achieving peace in Korea, for realizing the disarmament initiatives so far made and for providing preconditions for reunification by way of confederation.

The expansion of the CD membership constitutes yet still one of the major issues at current meetings. DPRK, one of the Group of 23, strongly hopes for an early solution of the issue of expansion in conformity with the interests of all countries and for disarmament and peace. It is already eight years since my country has participated in the CD as a non-member, and there are some countries waiting for about 20 years to become members. There were about 20 non-member States that attended the CD meetings in the late 1980s, but now the number is more than 50 countries, which even produces inconveniences in seating arrangements.

(Mr. Han, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

There is a Korean proverb which says that a decade changes mountains and rivers, and I think that the expansion of the CD's membership is already overdue.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Italy, Ambassador Vattani.

Mr. VATTANI (Italy): Mr. President, I wish, first of all, to seize this opportunity to personally congratulate you for the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament at a crucial moment for the accomplishment of a task of the greatest political momentum in the historic experience of this forum. I do not intend to overlook the expression of my deepest recognition and homage to your predecessor, Ambassador Jaap Ramaker, who with such great talent and diplomatic skill was able to play, at the same time, the double role of President of this Conference as well as that of Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee for the negotiation of the comprehensive test-ban treaty. Our greatest consideration and recognition are also addressed to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ambassador Vladimir Petrovsky, with the acknowledgement of his propulsive action which he, together with all the staff of the secretariat, has been able to grant to the work of this body.

In the present circumstances of evolving political dialogue, I thought that the constant attention of the Italian Government on the negotiations going on in this forum had to be stressed. We have to acknowledge that the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations was already happily marked by the success of the indefinite extension of the non-proliferation Treaty, as a further positive and encouraging example of the progress achieved in international cooperation under the auspices of a supreme body devoted to the universal harmonization and conciliation of the political balance of power. But an adequate and satisfactory celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations also requires, we believe, a comparable achievement in the field of the ongoing negotiations which are recognized as an additional contribution of the containment of nuclear proliferation and, as such, a further step towards a significant reduction of nuclear armaments.

The attitude of the Italian Government on these issues has been well known for a long time.

As a matter of fact, the perception of this incumbent threat has progressively taken root in the conscience of mankind, and once the situation of the cold war had been overcome, the hopes to surmount the obstacles which till now had prevented the implementation of a new order of international relations brightened intensively again.

The impetus of the initiatives for nuclear disarmament and for what is conducive to it, in a more or less long term, has produced encouraging

perspectives for the early conclusion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty. This is an endeavour for which the Italian Government and our Parliament have for some time expressed in eloquent terms their anxious expectations.

The objectives and purposes of this treaty have been clearly explained in the intervention presented, at the beginning of this session, by the Director of the United States Arms Control Agency, Mr. Holum. He gave us unequivocal indications on the positive impact of the timely entry into force of such a treaty.

The Italian Government has great confidence in the wise attitude of all the representatives of the member States, as well as of the observers, to assure a responsible contribution to the conclusion, in the agreed time-frame, of the ongoing negotiations. This achievement should pave the way to positive evolution of the entire policy of international security and to its definition under new principles and endeavours.

I feel convinced and confident that the wishes I am expressing may be shared by all the partners of the European Union whose presidency is at present entrusted to my country. I wish to underline the common will expressed by all members of the Union to secure the maximum support to reach our objectives in the agreed time-frame of June 1996, which has been made clear in unequivocal terms.

The Italian position in the negotiations for a nuclear-test-ban treaty characterizes itself, as is well known, for the adherence to a formula of a total exclusion of any nuclear-test explosion. Consequently, for us any compromise relating to the request for exceptions for so-called "peaceful nuclear explosions", which would practically nullify the spirit and the purpose of the treaty, is unacceptable. It seems, in fact, impossible to make a distinction, and to draw a limit, between the information and data achievable through a nuclear-weapon test and a so-called peaceful explosion: both enterprises could give similar results applicable in the military field and in the improvement and proliferation of nuclear armaments.

Concerning the mechanism of entry into force of the treaty, my Government heads towards the secure involvement in the ratification of all the most concerned parties.

In the Executive Council of the organization for the implementation of the treaty, Italy aims at attaining a position in line with her commitments in sharing the financial burden of the United Nations system, a criterion which should gain a privileged consideration.

An efficient and highly reliable system of verification with the capability to strongly deter any attempt to circumvent the rules of the treaty should offer an innovatory and fundamental instrument to provide adequate assurances of the greatest security. Moreover my Government believes that - in view of the particular nature of the tests banned by the treaty - it is of the greatest importance that procedures be developed to capture time-critical phenomena through on-site inspection carried out promptly after a possible ambiguous event.

(Mr. Vattani, Italy)

The Italian delegation will not fail to assure, as it has done in the past, its full support to reach satisfactory compromise solutions in this negotiation and, for this purpose, welcomes the announced intention of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, Ambassador Ramaker, to produce a streamlined text of the treaty to facilitate the search for common denominators on the basic issues.

I do not intend to overlook the activities of this body beyond the present impending aims, and I wish to stress my Government's expectations for the future tasks already assigned to the Conference as the sole multilateral global disarmament negotiating forum of the international community. In cooperation with the deliberations and recommendations submitted by the Disarmament Commission of the United Nations to the General Assembly, the working perspectives of the Conference on Disarmament reflect a great number of intents. In this regard, I would like to express my fervent wish for the already undertaken work of the Special Coordinator for the agenda of the Conference, the representative of Algeria, Ambassador Meghlaoui, whose consultations I hope will attain unanimously shared results without any linkage or precondition which could hamper and penalize initiatives commonly considered necessary and urgent.

The road to the reduction of nuclear armaments is bound to pass through some unavoidable stages. First among them, and already identified a long time ago, is the negotiation of a non-discriminatory multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. This is the indispensable wedge of an expanding mosaic of conditions necessary to a concrete realization of further developments to strengthen and complement the non-proliferation regime.

The issue of the reduction of conventional armaments deserves also a special priority not only to adequately balance the present convergence of interest on nuclear disarmament but also to face, with credible actions of containment, the worrying proliferation of uncontrolled or illicit spread of conventional arms. This is a problem which is the cause and origin of so many conflicts whose primary victims are civilian populations and whose dramatic impact on the economic and social development of entire regions is dramatically evident.

I have already stressed the importance and validity of the tasks assigned to this forum, as the sole multilateral body for disarmament negotiations. To make its goals a useful reality, and taking into account the present constant evolution of international relations as well as the evident restructuring and adjustment of regional political influences and assets, the Conference is inevitably bound to revise its present composition in line with factual realities. For this reason the issue of the expansion of the Conference is acquiring increasing urgency. I therefore wish to recommend the overcoming of the residual difficulties for effective and conclusive implementation of the so-called "admission in principle" decided by this Conference on 21 September 1995, having due regard to the unavoidable measure of enlarging

(Mr. Vattani, Italy)

the said admission to all the countries which have presented a formal request to join this Conference, including those partners of the European Union who have been till now excluded.

On the eve of the new century, some fundamentals of international relations appear in an even clearer light: the globalization of the interests at stake, the increasing internationalization of all social and political issues, the interdependence of economic interests, the need to face the challenges of the present world in a spirit of solidarity and conciliatory attitude for not always convergent exigencies, the common effort to build peace to which we all are due to give our contribution in order to enjoy its dividends.

I hope that these unavoidable points of reference will deserve the attention of this forum, in the pursuit of its aim.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Italy for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? I give the floor to the Republic of Korea.

Mr. HWANG (Republic of Korea): First of all, Sir, my delegation would like to associate itself with the previous speakers in congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of this Conference. My delegation asks for the floor to make a brief comment on what the representative of DPRK said. It seemed to me that the representative of DPRK did not see things in their right perspective. I would like to make two things clear.

First of all, my delegation would like to explain the reason why the foreign forces cannot be withdrawn until now. He mentioned the foreign force - that means the United States forces in Korea. The United States forces in Korea (USFK) have been stationed in Korea since they came to our aid under the flag of the United Nations to repel the Communist aggression in the Korean war which was triggered by North Korea in 1950. Therefore, the USFK was first called in by North Korea.

Since North Korea's threat has not diminished even after the conclusion of the Armistice Agreement in 1953, the USFK has continued to be stationed in the Republic of Korea (ROK) on the basis of the ROK-United States mutual defence treaty, contributing to the maintenance of peace and stability on the Korean peninsula for over 40 years.

The USFK, therefore, needs to stay in the ROK not only to ensure a military balance but also to deter another outbreak of war on the Korean peninsula as long as the North Korean threat remains. At the same time, the USFK has been playing a significant role in maintaining the balance of power in the East Asia region.

Taking advantage of this opportunity, I would like to call the attention of the CD to the recent IAEA Board meeting which took place from 18 to 20 March this year. This was a meeting which expressed concern over DPRK's

(Mr. Hwang, Republic of Korea)

negligence in its cooperation with IAEA and fulfilment of its obligations under the IAEA safeguards agreement. The North Korean failure to fully cooperate with IAEA is a threat to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. HAN (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I am sorry to take the floor again, but I must say a few words. The delegate of South Korea mentioned the Korean war in 1950. I would like to ask him to read a book untitled An Unknown War published in London and a book written by an American journalist who observed the starting of the war. I only wish to add the fact that when there was a surprise attack against my country at dawn on 25 June 1950, we made a nationwide broadcast about this invasion, but there was no announcement in South Korea.

With regard to IAEA relations, we are faithfully implementing our obligations.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for his statement. I wonder if I could come in here and make an observation which is in the form of an appeal. I think the last two interventions have carefully elucidated the points and the issues, and we are all very clear on it. I wonder if I could prevail on the representative of the Republic of Korea not to insist on taking the floor at this time. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. HWANG (Republic of Korea): My delegation is very reluctant to get involved in any political argument. I want to leave the answer to all the members of the CD here.

The PRESIDENT: We have exhausted our list of speakers, and as you see before you, the secretariat has circulated, at my request, a revised tentative timetable of meetings for next week. This timetable was prepared in consultation with the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban and is, as usual, merely indicative and subject to change if necessary. On this understanding, may I assume that the timetable is acceptable?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: At the request of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Nuclear Test Ban, I should like to inform delegations that immediately after this plenary, a short meeting of Working Group 1 of the Ad Hoc Committee will take place. This, in turn, will be followed by a meeting of the Friend of the Chair on on-site inspection.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 26 March 1996 at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at noon.

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CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.732
26 March 1996

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 26 March 1996, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Abuah (Nigeria)

GE.96-60941 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 732nd plenary meeting of the Conference of Disarmament.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome, on behalf of the Conference, and on my own behalf, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Her Excellency Tarja Halonen, who will be our first speaker today. Her presence among us today is, yet again, a clear indication of the important attached by her Government to our forum and the successful conclusion of the negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty. I also have on my list of speakers the representatives of Norway, France, Australia, Belgium and New Zealand.

As I announced at our last plenary meeting, once we have listened to the speakers inscribed for today, I intend to put to the Conference for decision the recommendation contained in paragraph 24 of the progress report on the forty-third session of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Cooperative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events (CD/1385), concerning proposed dates for its next session.

I should now like to give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Her Excellency Tarja Halonen.

Mrs. HALONEN (Finland): I am grateful for this opportunity to address the Conference on Disarmament at this very moment. A comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT) is finally within reach. This treaty will respond to the call that so many of us have made for so long. It will be an historic step. That is the outcome Finland wants from these negotiations. The CTBT is the means to achieve a permanent end to nuclear-test explosions. The test ban should and, I believe, will become a global norm. The objective is to have a universal treaty. The CTBT will prevent the development of new generations of nuclear weapons. It will prevent the emergence of entirely new nuclear arsenals. It will constrain all. It will make the world a safer place, and it will be beneficial for the environment.

In view of the imminence of a test-ban treaty, the continuation of nuclear testing has been particularly sad. It is no wonder that reactions to recent Chinese and French testing have been strong the world over. Finland welcomes the announcement by President Chirac on 29 January of a definitive end to French nuclear testing, and the active French commitment to achieving a CTBT. We urge China to join the other nuclear-weapon States and stop any further testing. This is not an issue on which anyone can go one's own way without regard to consequences for the negotiations.

Finland strongly supports the goal of having the treaty concluded by the end of June. The momentum is there. Now that the end of the negotiations is well within sight, a distinction should be drawn between what belongs to the treaty and what belongs to the work of the Preparatory Commission following signature of the treaty. This is not the time for micromanagement. Australia and Iran have assisted the process through their comprehensive contributions. We welcome them. We also welcome the leadership of Ambassador Ramaker in pushing the negotiations forward.

Let me indicate our choices on some of the key issues yet to be resolved. Finland welcomes the continuing movement towards consensus on what, after all, a test ban is all about. The scope of the treaty should mean zero explosions, zero yields, and a zero distinction between peaceful and non-peaceful explosions. The test ban will be an achievement that stands on its own, serving the twin goals of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. It would be a disservice to make the ban conditional on other objectives. Calls for extending the scope to cover not only explosions but also other activities risk agreement on the treaty itself.

Finland wants the treaty to enter into force as soon as possible upon signature. A set number of ratifications, as in the case of the Chemical Weapons Convention, should be the sole trigger.

The international community, and world public opinion, will be assuming that nuclear-test explosions are a thing of the past when the treaty is signed. Signature constitutes commitment. But commitment could be made explicit. Finland therefore urges that upon signature the nuclear-weapon States affirm, jointly or individually, that pending ratification they will not test and that they will swiftly ratify the treaty.

I welcome the prospect that the CTBT organization will be located in Vienna. There should be a close relationship with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Necessary arrangements for this can be agreed upon in the Preparatory Commission and in the course of actual implementation of the treaty.

The provisions for the managing body, the Executive Council, should be so designed as to ensure a fair balance of representation between geographical groups and within groups. Every State party should have an opportunity to serve on the Executive Council.

The work of the Preparatory Commission in Vienna should be launched as of the signature of the treaty. Finland is ready to make an advance payment to this end.

Let me now turn to the issue of verification. The establishment of an international monitoring system (IMS) will be a demanding task. Finland supports the four networks - seismic, radionuclide, hydroacoustic and infrasound - incorporated in the rolling text. In view of its crucial role in helping to detect underground explosions, noble gas monitoring should be included in the IMS.

My Government is making available a station (FINES) in central Finland for the primary seismic network and a laboratory in Helsinki for radionuclide monitoring. We will also cooperate through other national facilities.

The IMS will provide technical means to ensure compliance with treaty obligations. But it will also increase knowledge of the respective technologies and of global conditions regarding, among other things, radiation and seismic events. Therefore, it also serves health and the environment. All States parties will benefit from this cooperation.

Finland expects readable, refined information from the IMS, as well as access to any raw data collected. Finland is ready to contribute to the development of data processing in the international data centre.

Global monitoring will reveal events which could raise compliance concerns. I am sure that the vast majority of them can, and will, be settled through consultation and clarification. But the credibility of the treaty requires that it include procedures - available to all States parties - for dealing with situations when compliance is in doubt. That means effective on-site inspections.

Procedures should be so designed that it is possible to catch time-critical evidence. Anything less will undermine confidence. The first phase of the inspection should be carried out unless the Executive Council decides not to authorize it.

The CTBT will be a step toward the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons, a goal reaffirmed at the NPT Review and Extension Conference last May. The NPT Conference was a victory for peace and security. A permanent NPT does not sanction the permanent possession of nuclear weapons by anyone. On the contrary, principles and objectives were laid down which will provide the global context for further efforts toward nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. In this connection, Finland welcomes the signature yesterday by France, the United Kingdom and the United States of the additional protocols to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty.

In the end, it is the results that count. In terms of actual nuclear reductions, bilaterally negotiated agreements and unilateral action have so far produced the results. Implementation of START I is well under way. Finland welcomes the recent ratification of START II by the United States Senate. We hope that the Russian Duma will soon do likewise. That step would clear the way for consideration of START III. At the same time, it is fair to ask what the Conference on Disarmament can contribute to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. This Conference is a negotiating forum. That point cannot be overemphasized. If, in earlier years, dialogue was often an end in itself, that is no longer so. Today, concrete results are expected. The Conference is on its way to achieving the test ban. Next, it should negotiate to cut off production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

Looking beyond that, the entire agenda of the Conference should be readjusted to reflect post-cold-war needs. As its name already says, the Conference on Disarmament needs an agenda that spans the entire field of disarmament, nuclear and conventional. Indeed, it is in the field of

conventional disarmament that urgent international action is called for. It is conventional weapons - especially small arms and light weapons - that are used in gross violations of human rights in internal and regional conflicts. Conventional proliferation - to coin a term - threatens not only security and stability but the very basics of humanity in various parts of the world. In my opinion, the Conference on Disarmament cannot remain indifferent to this scourge.

Everyone acknowledges that the composition of the Conference does not reflect present realities. Last September, the Conference took the decision to expand its membership. This decision needs to be implemented. Finland has contributed to the work of the Conference for more than two decades as an observer. We are now doing so as one of the 23. We would like to contribute as a member without any further delay. For Finland, disarmament is a means to strengthen international peace and security. The Conference on Disarmament is the means to negotiate and make global disarmament a reality.

I wish you every success in your work.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Norway, Ambassador Skogmo.

Mr. SKOGMO (Norway): Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Nigeria and Norway have been alphabetical neighbours in the United Nations for many years. I hope we soon can enjoy the same pleasure in the CD. Meanwhile, my delegation looks forward to cooperating with you in the exercise of your functions. I can assure you of Norway's full support in your important endeavours.

For many years Norway has advocated the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We have supported political efforts to build consensus before negotiations could start. We have taken an active part in scientific preparations for building a reliable, credible and feasible verification system. In the view of the Norwegian Government, nuclear tests are a heavy strain on all international non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. Nuclear tests present a risk to the environment and to human health.

As an important step on the road to nuclear disarmament and arms control, we too welcome yesterday's signing by France, the United Kingdom and the United States of the additional Protocols to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty.

The reactions to the nuclear tests carried out by China and France, despite the moratorium exercised by the other nuclear-weapon States, clearly demonstrated that there is a strong world opinion against any nuclear testing. There are strong public expectations - also in my own country - that a comprehensive test-ban treaty should be concluded and universally implemented

as soon as possible. For the first time since mankind entered the nuclear age, a CTBT is within reach. It will not be understood by the world community if the commitment to reach at CTBT, expressed, inter alia, by the General Assembly, is blocked by a refusal to subordinate narrow perceptions of national interests to a broader and more global perspective.

A comprehensive test-ban treaty is important to restrain proliferation and development of new generations of nuclear weapons. Among the weapons of mass destruction, these are the ones that pose the most imminent threat to mankind. Our aim must be a nuclear-weapon-free world. A CTBT is a necessary prerequisite to that end. To insist on linkages to time-bound nuclear disarmament in the present negotiations is unrealistic and would derail the process. It would also be counter-productive, since it would make the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament not closer, but more distant. A failure to complete the CTBT this year would indeed be a major setback to the cause of nuclear disarmament. That is why senior officers of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, last year's Nobel Peace Prize winners, have advised strongly against any such linkage. Today, a treaty putting a complete end to all nuclear tests is the only feasible way of reducing the nuclear threat.

Norway has already stated our appreciation of the Iranian clean draft text and the Australian model treaty text. The texts are helpful tools to clarify where and how compromises are to be made. They clearly demonstrate that to conclude a CTBT is a matter of political willingness. Now the time has come to exercise the necessary political will. Let me briefly set out the views of my Government on the key issues before the Conference.

Norway would like to see universal adherence to the treaty. That is perhaps not realistic in the nearest future. We, however, believe its mere existence will have a positive and constraining impact. Hence, Norway favours a simple formula which will not permit any State to prevent the treaty from entering into force.

Norway sees no alternative to a truly comprehensive test ban. That means an absolute zero-yield standard, not allowing any nuclear-weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion. So-called peaceful nuclear explosions cannot be permitted within any credible and verifiable test-ban treaty.

Norway wants an independent CTBT organization with specific tasks and responsibilities. We welcome the candidature of Vienna to host the CTBTO and support a co-location with IAEA in the Vienna International Centre. To keep CTBTO as small and cost-effective as possible, there should be a possibility to make contractual cooperative arrangements for the use of specific expertise of other international organizations, IAEA in particular.

The composition of the Executive Council must be based on fair and equitable arrangements. All States parties should have an opportunity to be a member of the Executive Council and no State party may be permanently excluded. After having been excluded from taking part as an equal partner in the negotiating process, my delegation would certainly have great difficulty in accepting institutional arrangements which continue to be exclusive rather than inclusive. Continuous membership should be as limited as possible not to restrain fair and reasonable participation by other States parties. The paper presented by Ambassador Benjellcun-Touimi as Friend of the Chair on the composition of the Executive Council is, in our opinion, a fairly balanced compromise between different views and interests. As to the geographical distribution of seats, we should perhaps consider a mechanism which, after a given period, reviewed the number of seats allocated to each region in the light of the number of ratifications.

Norway has for many years actively participated in the Group of Seismological Experts (GSE). We have seen monitoring and verification as essential parts of a complete test-ban regime. We have done what we possibly can to prepare and to support the negotiations, putting at the disposal of the Conference national expertise developed over many years. We remain convinced that a credible treaty must be verifiable. To achieve confidence, treaty obligations must be effectively monitored. The international monitoring system (IMS) should be based on the four known technologies on which consensus has been achieved but not preclude the inclusion of additional technologies which may be available to strengthen the credibility of the IMS. On-site inspections (OSI) are natural and necessary parts of any verification regime to clarify any ambiguous events. A balance must be found between what is technically necessary to make OSI credible and what is politically acceptable. An OSI may well be a rare event, but the provisions should be sufficient to deter any violations of the treaty obligations. Abusive requests of OSI must be avoided, but it is equally important to hinder attempts to delay or even obstruct inspections.

It is decisive to establish a funding system that secures smooth and reliable operation of the CTBTO. Contributions of the States parties should be based on the United Nations scale of assessments. It should be possible to meet assessment obligations by a combination of direct payment and contribution credits. This could help to speed up the establishment and upgrading of the IMS. We agree that contribution credits must be limited to costs relevant to the establishment, upgrading and operation of IMS facilities.

In our view it is essential that the CTBTO becomes operational as soon as possible. Norway will therefore positively consider making advance contributions to this end and Norwegian facilities which will form part of the IMS will be made available from the beginning.

(Mr. Skogmo, Norway)

The negotiations on a CTBT clearly illustrate the prevailing anomaly of the unsolved question of CD membership. A United Nations-funded body dealing with issues affecting national interests of all United Nations members, on matters of global significance, must be open to all States willing and able to participate. Treaties calling for universal adherence should not be negotiated with restricted participation. An expansion of the CD, as we all know, is long overdue. Neither the CD nor any other international body receiving financial resources through the United Nations can escape the ongoing work on reforming the United Nations system. Another failure to meet the justified expectations of the candidates for full membership may well have an impact on the CD's future legitimacy and even survivability. Given the numerous statements by CD members in support of expansion in principle, to the Group of 23 and/or to other candidates, and given the unique negotiating experience represented in this chamber, my delegation find it increasingly hard to understand why a satisfactory solution to the membership issue continues to be elusive.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Norway for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of France, Mr. Rivasseau.

Mr. RIVASSEAU (France) (translated from French): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on taking up the Chair of this Conference, and to convey to you every wish for success from the French delegation.

I would like to draw to your attention and read to the Conference a statement jointly signed by the Governments of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and my Government. Our Governments signed:

"the three Protocols to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Rarotonga) on 25 March in Suva.

"Last year's NPT Review and Extension Conference agreed that ... nuclear-weapon free zones, based on arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned, enhance international peace and security. The Conference also agreed that the cooperation of all the nuclear-weapons States and their respect and support for the relevant protocols is necessary for the maximum effectiveness of such zones and the relevant protocols.

"Our decision to sign the protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga demonstrates our clear support for a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the South Pacific.

"It is also an important further milestone in demonstrating our commitment to nuclear non-proliferation.

(Mr. Rivasseau, France)

"It underlines our wish to see a permanent end to nuclear testing throughout the world. It will give a further boost to the negotiations for a comprehensive test-ban treaty, which we believe should be completed in the first half of 1996."

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of France for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Australia, Mr. Cole.

Mr. COLE (Australia): Since this is the first occasion on which my delegation takes the floor under your presidency, Sir, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference and to assure you of the support and cooperation of the delegation of Australia. It is a special pleasure to see Nigeria, in your person, guiding our deliberations. My delegation warmly recalls the energetic commitment of Nigeria to our common disarmament and non-proliferation goals. We also recall the particularly productive bilateral cooperation our two delegations have shared over the years, including in the development of this Conference's historic agreement to commence the negotiation of the CTBT.

I would like to advise the Conference this morning that the Australian Government has warmly welcomed the signing in Fiji on 25 March of the three Protocols to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, the Treaty of Rarotonga, by France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. All five nuclear-weapon States have now undertaken not to use, nor threaten to use, nuclear explosive devices against any member of the Zone, and not to test nuclear explosive devices within the Treaty area, and to apply the provisions of the Treaty to their non-self-governing territories within the Zone. These accessions to the Treaty Protocols formally bring to an end the unhappy chapter of nuclear testing in the South Pacific.

In his statement, the Australian Prime Minister, Mr. John Howard, said that France's signature to the Protocols is particularly welcome, as is France's response to the concerns of South Pacific States by announcing its intention to close its testing facilities, except those required for environmental monitoring, and to support the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) study into the effects of its nuclear testing.

The Australian Foreign Minister, Mr. Alexander Downer, in a statement also welcoming the signing of the Rarotonga Protocols by the three countries concerned, expressed the hope that this action would impart renewed impetus to the contemporary nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament agenda, in particular to the finalization of negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

The fact that all five nuclear-weapon States have now undertaken to respect the provisions of the Treaty of Rarotonga brings to fruition what the countries of the South Pacific set out to achieve when they signed the Treaty in 1985. It is also, we trust, a positive signal to other countries and

peoples which aspire to, or have created nuclear-weapon-free zones in their own regions. Most recently in this regard, we welcome developments in South-East Asia and Africa.

Like others, we believe that the message from all these developments is clear. The international community ardently desires to live in a world which is secure from the threat of nuclear confrontation. It requires the cessation forthwith of all nuclear explosions; and it will not easily forgive the Conference on Disarmament should it fail to deliver a comprehensive test-ban treaty this year. It will expect this body and other relevant international and multilateral organizations to continue to pursue further meaningful nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament measures with imagination and with vigour.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Australia for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium, Ambassador Guillaume.

Baron GUILLAUME (Belgium) (translated from French): First of all, Mr. President, allow me to say how pleased we are to see you in the Chair. We are aware of your reputation for excellent diplomatic qualities; there is no doubt that you will need them in the coming weeks to carry out the task falling to you. In carrying out your functions, you can rely on my delegation's full cooperation.

If I am taking the floor today, it is following the statement just made by the distinguished representative of France on behalf of his country, but also on behalf of Great Britain and the United States. Belgium, as a country which holds dear the cause of disarmament in general and more particularly that of nuclear disarmament, welcomes the fact that France, Great Britain and the United States have signed the Treaty of Rarotonga establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the South Pacific. This is an important step towards disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, and, together with all the local people, who have now seen the disappearance of this sword of Damocles, we welcome this historic event. We also consider it a very positive sign, coming from these three nuclear countries, of a resolve to make progress in the field of nuclear disarmament, and we hope to see fall-out from this decision here in Geneva, in our negotiations on the CTBT. It is essential for the negotiations to be given a fresh impetus - coming in particular from all the nuclear Powers - if we wish to see them completed by the deadline laid down, that is, by June this year.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Belgium for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand, Ms. Duncan.

Ms. DUNCAN (New Zealand): My delegation joins in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the office of President and assures you of New Zealand's full cooperation.

(Ms. Duncan, New Zealand)

New Zealand welcomes the signature on Monday, 25 March by the United States, the United Kingdom and France of the Protocols to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty. As has been explained already this morning, the Protocols contain pledges not to manufacture, station or test nuclear explosive devices within any territories in the zone for which the signatories are responsible. In signing the Protocols, France, the United States and the United Kingdom also pledge not to use or threaten to use nuclear explosive devices against any parties to the Treaty, and not to test explosive devices anywhere within the zone. The then USSR and China signed these protocols relevant to them in 1986 and 1987 respectively.

So, all five nuclear-weapon States have now acknowledged the wish of South Pacific countries to live in a nuclear-free zone. France's signature brings an end to French nuclear testing in the South Pacific for all time. The New Zealand Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Jim Bolger, has underlined the significance of this development not only for the South pacific but also for the international community as a whole. He has pledged New Zealand's continuing efforts to conclude a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing all over the world, as well as New Zealand's support for the other nuclear-free-zone treaty arrangements in Latin America, Africa and South-East Asia. These treaties are a clear expression of the growing movement to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of New Zealand for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. That apparently concludes my list of speakers for today, unless any other delegation wishes to take the floor.

If not, I should now like to put to the Conference for decision the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts that its next session be held from 20 to 24 May 1996. May I take it that these dates are acceptable to the Conference?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: Before adjourning, I wish to remind you that this plenary meeting will be followed immediately by a meeting of the Friend of the Chair on on-site inspection of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 28 March 1996 at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.